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Additional W-2 Funding Available for Immigrants

Madison – Governor Jim Doyle announced today that the Department of Workforce Development will grant an additional \$955,467 in funds to Wisconsin Works (W-2) agencies in counties with newly arriving Hmong immigrants. The distribution of the funding is based on workload and benefit needs and will supplement the agencies' activities to quickly move these newly arriving Wisconsin residents to employment.

"Through the next several months, Wisconsin will welcome up to 3,600 Hmong refugees from Thailand. These refugees are anxious to begin working as quickly as possible and will be looking to the W-2 agencies for assistance as they make their transition to work. This new funding will boost the efforts of the W-2 agencies, who provide a link to local employers, to connect the refugees to jobs," said Governor Doyle.

The additional funding will assist in meeting the needs of the expected immigrants for cash payments and/or benefits in the W-2 program. The funding allocations are based on workload and benefit needs of the agency, and the anticipated number of Hmong refugees expected to settle in the area.

Since December 2003, when the U.S. State Department announced plans to admit Lao-Hmong refugees who have been living for many years in a compound in Thailand, the Doyle Administration has been working closely with local governments and community leaders to ensure the state is prepared for their arrival. Many will be admitted to the United States under this program, and at least 3,600 Hmong refugees are expected to immigrate to Wisconsin.

"Wisconsin has a great history of working together to assist the Hmong to become productive citizens in Wisconsin," said Secretary Gassman, head of the Department of Workforce Development, which is charged with administering the W-2 program. "The W-2 agencies have an important role in assisting the refugees to find employment so they can fully participate in Wisconsin's economy and communities."

The Hmong assisted the United States during the Vietnam War, when they were recruited by the CIA in the fight against Communist rebels in Laos. More than 300,000 Hmong, fearing retribution after the Communist takeover in 1975, fled to neighboring Thailand. This group of refugees are among the last remaining Hmong in Thailand.

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Allocations for each W-2 agency:

Statewide Total	\$955,467
Brown County	64,445
Calumet County	12,608
Chippewa County	7,005
Capital Consortium	72,851
Dunn County	18,212
Eau Claire County	32,223
Fond du Lac County	14,010
Jefferson County	1,401
La Crosse County	70,049
Marathon County	126,088
Outagamie County	57,440
Lakeshore Consortium, serving	134,495
Winnebago County	46,232
PAW Consortium, serving	63,043
Milwaukee MAXIMUS (5 & 6)	219,954
WCI –JJM, Consortium for Jackson, Juneau, & Monroe Counties	2,802
WCI - Pierce & St. Croix	1,401
Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington Workforce Development Board, Inc. (for Ozaukee and Washington Counties)	11,208

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